

# Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services

December 19, 2011

## Meeting Minutes/Summary

### **Introduction**

The Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services (FICEMS) meeting took place on December 19, 2011, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:25 p.m. EDT at the Department of Homeland Security Office of Health Affairs.

### **Members in Attendance**

#### **Department of Homeland Security**

Alexander Garza, MD, MPH, FICEMS Chair,  
Assistant Secretary of Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer

Chief Ernest Mitchell  
U.S. Fire Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

#### **Department of Transportation**

David Strickland,  
Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

#### **Federal Communications Commission**

David Furth  
Deputy Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau

#### **Department of Defense**

George Peach Taylor Jr., MD, MPH  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Health Protection and Readiness

#### **Department of Health and Human Services**

Kevin Yeskey, MD  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

Terry Adirim, MD, MPH  
Director, Office of Special Health Affairs  
Health Resources and Services Administration

Richard Hunt, MD  
Director, Division of Injury Response  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Jean Sheil  
Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response Operations  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Betty Hastings  
Indian Health Services

**State EMS Director**  
Robert Bass, MD  
Executive Director, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems

### **Meeting Proceedings**

FICEMS Chair Alexander Garza opened the meeting by thanking committee members for their ongoing participation. Since the last meeting, FICEMS had approved the National EMS Assessment, which provides new insight into the national EMS system. Dr. Garza reminded the committee of the strategic planning effort which will help to focus the work of FICEMS and its technical working groups. Dr. Garza also informed the committee that there was no update from the White House on the effort to improve collaboration and cooperation of federal EMS activities. The FICEMS options paper was submitted to the White House in May 2011, and is currently a policy document under review and is not yet available to the public. After these updates, Dr. Garza congratulated Ernest Mitchell on his appointment as U.S. Fire Administrator and welcomed him as the newest member of the committee.

After introductions, the minutes from the July 12, 2011 FICEMS meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved with no changes.

### **Culture of Safety Project Update**

Drew Dawson, Director of the Office of EMS at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) gave an update on the EMS Culture of Safety Project, which is being led by the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) through a competitively awarded cooperative agreement from NHTSA. The project focuses on the safety of both patients and providers and a stakeholder meeting was held in June 2011 to help guide the project. ACEP recently completed an initial public draft of the strategy document, which they presented to the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) during the previous week, and the draft was posted to the website [www.emscultureofsafety.org](http://www.emscultureofsafety.org). Public feedback is sought until February 24, 2012.

### **National EMS Advisory Council Report**

Noah Smith from the NHTSA Office of EMS provided an update from the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC). The NEMSAC is the only Federal Advisory Committee Act compliant group that provides advice and guidance to the federal government specifically on EMS issues. Council members are appointed by the Secretary of Transportation, and last April Secretary LaHood chartered the group for two more years of service. The council met the

previous week in Arlington for a day and a half, and approved a number of recommendations involving emergency vehicle operations and EMS leadership's involvement in regards to safety. Those recommendations are available on [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov).

Mr. Smith informed FICEMS of the work being developed by the NEMSAC's subcommittees, including work on evidence-based guidelines implementation, the utilization of NEMSIS data, the role of leadership in EMS, and financing issues, among others. Mr. Smith also thanked Gregg Margolis and Gregg Lord of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) for coming to the NEMSAC meeting to discuss ASPR's EMS programming. The NEMSAC also agreed to host a roundtable event on the need to keep the EMS Education Agenda for the Future current and up-to-date. This roundtable will likely be held in conjunction with their regularly scheduled March 2012 meeting.

David Strickland asked Mr. Smith for clarity on the issues discussed by the NEMSAC regarding emergency vehicle operations. Mr. Smith explained that the NEMSAC's Safety Committee had requested a study that examine the use, availability, and impact of emergency vehicle operation courses (EVOC) throughout the country.

### **National EMS Assessment**

Dr. Garza explained that the National EMS Assessment was undertaken by FICEMS and funded by NHTSA and is the committee's first step in fulfilling its statutory duty to identify needs within the EMS community. The final draft of the assessment was recently approved and would be released to the public that week online through [www.ems.gov](http://www.ems.gov). Cathy Gotschall of NHTSA explained that the assessment was the first ever comprehensive national and state-by-state assessment of the nation's EMS systems, and will be a vital tool on the national and state level to assist in allocating limited resources more effectively by identifying areas of need. The assessment will also allow states to compare themselves to other similar states, and allow them to identify national leaders in specific aspects of EMS system development, and to learn from states operating at the highest levels.

### **Technical Working Group Updates**

Mr. Dawson introduced the Technical Working Group and requested committee reports. Rick Patrick of the Assessment Committee thanked Ms. Gotschall for her presentation. Mr. Patrick explained that the committee has concentrated its efforts on the National EMS Assessment.

Rick Hunt provided an update for the Medical Oversight Committee. Dr. Hunt explained the work that has been done for the committee's two objectives: helicopter EMS (HEMS) and evidence-based guidelines. For HEMS, there was a June 2011 meeting with the CDC to outline the specifics of HEMS use and availability in response to a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendation. A second meeting was held in August 2011 with expert working groups to help develop a draft of recommendations to be vetted by invited HEMS stakeholders at a meeting that will be held in Atlanta in early 2012. For evidence-based guidelines, a manuscript describing the development of the EBG Model Process was recently accepted for publication in *Academic Emergency Medicine* and will be published in 2012. The draft final report for the

Children's National Medical Center study is also in development, and the committee is drafting a communications strategy to national organizations on evidence-based guideline efforts.

Susan McHenry provided the update for the Data and Research Committee. Ms. McHenry explained the two objectives of the committee, to educate internal review boards (IRBs) on emergency care research and work on NEMSIS utilization. On educating IRBs, there were two webcasts on exception from Informed Consent (EFIC) for Emergency Research on February 28, 2011 and March 25, 2011. An IRB Options Conferences, sponsored by the Emergency Care Coordination Center and FICEMS, was held September 19-20, 2011 in Washington, D.C. For NEMSIS utilization, a project just began that looks to evaluate linked NEMSIS and trauma registry data in four states and an introductory NEMSIS webinar is being planned for the future.

Bob Bass provided the update for the Preparedness Committee. Dr. Bass discussed the committee's efforts in regards to pandemic influenza preparedness, MCI triage, and MCI preparedness. Dr. Bass also stated that significant work has been done in regards to the Mexican Hat bus crash incident, and would be speaking on it later.

Mr. Patrick provided an update for the Safety Committee. The committee's focus areas include work on EMS provider safety and health, EMS patient care safety, and EMS safety data research. The committee continues to have involvement with the EMS Culture of Safety Project that is being developed by ACEP through a cooperative agreement with NHTSA. Mr. Patrick also explained the collaborative efforts the committee has engaged in with the U.S. Fire Administration.

There was no update from the Education and Workforce Committee.

Dr. Garza then asked if there were any changes to the working groups' two-year work plans that needed to be approved. Ms. McHenry explained that additions were needed for the Data and Research Committee work plan. The committee motioned and unanimously approved the changes to the Data and Research committee's work plan.

### **NTSB Recommendations**

Dr. Bass introduced the first NTSB recommendation to FICEMS regarding the Mexican Hat bus crash, and sought to have approval on a final report. The recommendation involved two components: evaluation and guideline development. Dr. Bass explained that a workshop was convened with the Institute of Medicine to review the findings from the NTSB report of the 2008 Mexican Hat bus crash, and the near and long term opportunities to improve response in rural settings. On evaluation, FICEMS endorsed the EMS Incident Response and Readiness Assessment (EIRRA) and the Model Inventory of Emergency Care Elements (MIECE). The tools were developed by the National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO) through a cooperative agreement with NHTSA. They then developed a set of guidelines that rely on EIRRA and MIECE to evaluate EMS system capabilities. Dr. Bass presented a final report to the NTSB from FICEMS that includes the tools and guidelines for states. A motion was made to approve the final report. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Hunt gave details of the HEMS recommendations. The first recommendation involved the development of a national guideline for the appropriate utilization of HEMS. The second recommendation called for the development of national guidelines on the use and availability of helicopters in EMS. A motion was made to approve an update letter to the NTSB on progress by FICEMS. The letter was unanimously approved.

### **CDC Guidelines for Field Triage of Injured Patients**

Dr. Hunt provided an update on the CDC's revised guidelines for field triage of injured patients. Dr. Hunt explained the process that went into changing the guidelines and thanked members of the expert panel that helped in collaborating in the revisions. Dr. Garza noted that FICEMS had previously endorsed the 2011 CDC guidelines.

### **FICEMS Strategic Planning**

Dr. Garza then explained the FICEMS strategic planning project. In late 2010 the project began to help steer FICEMS and its member agencies towards common goals. Mr. Dawson provided an update on the strategic plan. He stated that an overall vision for the project would be completed in March 2012, after which the formal planning process would begin. Mr. Dawson encouraged the ideas of the technical working group, and expressed that the plan was an effective way of guiding the activities of FICEMS.

### **Preparedness Committee Options Paper on MCI Triage Uniformity**

Dr. Bass gave an update on the Preparedness Committee options paper on MCI triage uniformity. The document, the Model Uniform Core Criteria (MUCC) for Mass Casualty Incident originally evolved from a CDC funded research project. The document outlines two options for the FICEMS to consider. First, to request advice from the NEMSAC on actions FICEMS should consider in implementing MUCC. The second option is for FICEMS to adopt a position statement in support of the MUCC. FICEMS motioned and approved that the TWG seek the counsel of the NEMSAC and produce a draft MUCC implementation plan by the December 2012 meeting.

### **Election of FICEMS Chair and Vice-Chair**

Kevin Yeskey and David Strickland were nominated and approved as the Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for FICEMS in 2012.

### **Agency Updates and Other Business**

David Furth provided an update on the FCC's efforts on Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911). NG911 will provide existing and new 9-1-1 services via IP networks rather than via the legacy switched telephone network. Over time, NG911 will fully replace the existing 9-1-1 system, but the transition will take time and will not be uniform. Legacy 9-1-1 works well, but is considered limited. Circuit switched copper line networks are aging and capacity-constrained. There is limited back-up routing capability for PSAPs. NG911 provides greater resiliency and reliability.

IP-based networks are more flexible and redundant. The FCC has developed a five step plan for NG911:

- Develop location accuracy mechanisms – July 2011
- Enable consumers to send text, photos and videos to PSAPs – September 2011
- Develop an NG911 funding model – September 2011 FCC Cost Study
- Facilitate the completion and implementation of NG911 technical standards – ongoing
- Work with state and other stakeholder to develop an NG911 governance framework – ongoing

### **Public Comments**

The first question was from Lou Lombardo regarding the future goals of FICEMS. Dr. Garza explained that the strategic planning process will fulfill this purpose. Mr. Lambardo then said that he had recently sent Mr. Strickland and Mr. Dawson a document that outlined three actionable items that FICEMS could take that would help improve safety. The first was to adopt a timely and optimal treatment of serious crash injuries by ensuring one hour Medevac or less in the U.S. by 2020. The second item was to adopt a national goal for the next year to gather and republish state crash injury data, which would express the number of injuries in a calendar year, per state. This would provide an annual measure of motor vehicle crash fatalities per thousand injuries for each state, and allow states to compare with one another. The third was to adopt a goal for next year to publish the first annual NHTSA recommended urgency algorithm.

Mr. Strickland said that though some ideas seem simple, they are in fact difficult in terms of how one thinks about them, quantify them, and execute them, and that one must make sure that the ideas are rooted in sound science and statistics. Mr. Strickland then reminded the committee that in 2010 the U.S. had the lowest amount of recorded motor vehicle fatalities since 1949.

The FICEMS adjourned at 4:25 p.m. EDT.